

Skagit County Agricultural Advisory Board (AAB)
Minutes –August 15th, 2007

Members in attendance:

Kim Mower
Nels Lagerlund
Murray Benjamin
Randy Good
Bob Hughes
Lyle Wesen
Roger Knutzen
Bill McMoran
Annie Lohman
John Vendeland

Members not in attendance:

Mike Hulbert
Dave Boon

Others in attendance

Carly Ruacho
Jay Derr
Will Honea
Ryan Walters

1. Call to order. 7:04 p.m. Kim Mower called meeting to order and welcomed the committee.
2. Minutes. With the following amendments: Murray was proxy for Bill M and Lyle for Annie the minutes were approved.
3. Summary of the Supreme Court (SC) decision. Jay Derr summarized the decision and the descending options. The 8 of the 9 SC agreed with the Commissioners, the GMA does not require enhancement or putting buffers back. We are to balance resource with critical areas. 6 justices said the County's monitoring plan was not enough and 2 said it was. One didn't like any of it. They said all in all the basic approach was okay. County is back before the Hearings Board to try and get a 'stay' since this years legislation passed the "time-out" rule saying no new rules until 2010. We prevailed...no changes to the program at this time. The Ordinance says we will complete in 3 years, so we will follow that to determine where we are and need to go, but not change any rules for ag. It was believed that benchmarks were necessary in order to determine where to go in the future. Also need to pay attention to State standards. The Clean Water Act or ESA or Tribal Treaty may throw a new twist into the picture in the future. Derr stressed that the County should continue the leadership to keep this moving forward in a positive manner and that could help when going before the Ruckelshaus Center. On the issue of Best Available. Science (BAS) the County did a good job explaining why it didn't use it. Ryan and Jay would be going to Olympia to meet with those from the Ruckelshaus Center to tell 'our story'. Will stated that the salmon legacy program would resurface but in a different format. There may be some State money for voluntary actions and not use a tax.
4. Wetland Bank Mitigation. Don M shared that the banks may be offering a fee to the County to try and offset impacts to taking farmland out of production. Friends of Skagit County have written a letter opposing the banks. The AAB should do the same. Kim will author a letter and ask Mary Heinrich to help. There needs to be a formal request to the County to change their interpretation of a permitted use.

5. New FLP Director. Don M asked when the County would be getting a new one. Randy G stated by the first of the year.
6. Skagit Herald. Roger K reported that there have been no articles lately. Don M said the SVH gave \$200,000 to the land trust. Will reschedule Mr. Wood to come at a later date.
7. Chuckanut Metropolitan Park District: Lyle gave an update. The hearing was postponed until a SEPA determination is made.
8. Farmland Legacy Program. Randy gave an update.
9. Discussion on what is Ag's biggest threat...
 - a. Larry Wasserman not understanding.
 - b. Encroachment issues
 - c. Competitive...need to be a competitor
 - d. Getting the youth involved
 - e. Labor force
 - f. Critical mass and infrastructure...loose this and the whole picture starts to fall apart.
Mary Margaret Haugen may get \$\$\$ for a study to determine where this going.
10. Planning Update. Carly stated that the BoCC will maybe have a joint meeting to discuss the outcome of the final Comp Plan approvals. The BoCC did reverse all forest issues and the topic of restoration they compromised with no moratorium.

Kim Mower called for adjournment of the meeting.

Adjourned 9:06